

The House of Education,
Ambleside.

28. 2. 1955

Sir

I am much interested in the account of the Macdonald experiment in Canada which appeared in the Times of Feb 16th & venture to think that some particulars of a scheme which has been doing good work in England for some twelve years, may be perhaps interesting suggestion to those engaged in working the Macdonald Experiment.

We have a large number of children in England & the Colonies who are brought up in home-schoolrooms & who have therefore lacked many of the advantages of the school-taught child.

The problem was how to get these children educated in spite of the second-rate, untrained, governesses which, with a few exceptions, were all that could be had some years ago.

The work of the Parents' Review School has produced such results that we feel now very han we given the home-taught child all the advantages of one taught at school; but have placed him intellectually in a better position for any work which may come to him in after life.

We find that the secret of education is to bring children up upon books & things that the oral lesson or lecture is, when often used, deindividualising.

So much thought has, in the last few years, been given to bringing children up on things that what remains is to do away with the oral lesson as a principal

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means of education - getting children
into direct touch with books.

We find that the use of books - good living
books & many books - produces a habit
of intelligent attention which no amount
of oral teaching could do.

The children read (or have read to them if
too young to read) their own good, living,
books upon a considerable number of
subjects. One intelligent reading after
the kind of training referred to will
enable a child well in his own way -
away that shows his own mind has
worked upon the matter - the episode
older children will fix the period of

an argument, or the events recorded in a newspaper article on some special subject, in the same intelligent way.

The children thus get ~~the~~, not only the power of reading but they ^{also} get into touch with the best thought past present in the books set for study.

The work seen in by children brought up in this way (we have some hundreds of sets during the year) shows in almost all cases intelligent grasp of the subjects studied. "Talk" "Showers" are rare. We have now several schools carrying out our programmes & examination papers successfully.

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This sort of work would seem to be available in Canada when the parents can afford the necessary books but, when there are not enough children to make it possible to work a good school, peripatetic teachers (visiting small schools for nature work & handicrafts) might work half a dozen such little schools - each of them under one or two intelligent, but not highly-qualified, teachers.

In fact the conditions seem to me much the same as those existing in our upper classes in County districts in England when two or three families often unite under one roof.

I must beg you to pardon this suggestion if it does not meet the case.

for your consideration

I am sending you (under another cover,

I The P.M.U. leaflet (of which the P.R.S.
is an outcome.)II a pamphlet written after 12 yrs experience
of this sort of work.III The Time-table programmes for the
current term.

IV The programmes for last term.

V The prospectus of the Parents Review
School (a) in families (b) in schools.

Dear Sir,

Truly yours

Charlotte H. Mason

(Elsie)